WORLD CHRONICLE

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PROGRAMME: **"WORLD CHRONICLE"**

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SYNOPSIS: SADCC

The Honourable Festus G. Mogae, Vice President of Botswana and Chairman of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) Council of Ministers, discusses the important role SADCC plays in the social and economic development of the southern African states. The removal of obstacles such as limitations to the free flow of capital and labour between African states is among the top priorities on SADCC's agenda of cooperation. Mr. Mogae believes the admission of South Africa to SADCC depends on the full democratization of South Africa. He asserts that any future plans for sustainable development will most definitely take into consideration the preservation of the African environment.

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VOICE: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is WORLD CHRONICLE, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's WORLD CHRONICLE.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns and this is WORLD CHRONICLE.

Since independence, African countries have struggled to achieve economic and social development. Part of this effort has involved increasing cooperation between nations. More than a decade ago, a number of southern African countries established the Southern African Development Coordination Conference, or SADCC. Last August, SADCC has assumed a new role as the Southern African Development Community.

Our guest today is the Honourable Festes G. Mogae, Vice President of the Republic of Botswana and Chairman of the Southern African Developmen. Coordination Conference Council of Ministers. Mr. Mogae will be interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by Bhaskar Menon, of PTI-TV of India; Yvette Collymore, of Inter Press Service; and Obi Emekekwue of the News Agency of Nigeria. Mr. Mogae, welcome to WORLD CHRONICLE.

Mr. Vice President, perhaps you could tell us a bit about SADCC. How many member states, what is the population covered by the membership, and the aims of the Conference?

MOGAE: There are about 10 members, 10 countries. I'm not sure I know the population, but it is in the region of a total of about 30 million.

LITTLEJOHNS: Thirty million?

MOGAE: Thereabouts, yes.

LITTLEJOHNS: South Africa, I take it, it is not a member.

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MOGAE: No, South Africa is not a member.

LITTLEJOHNS: What is the reason for that? Because South Africa is pretty much an economic powerhouse in the region, is it not?

MOGAE: Yes, but we hope that when they have become a democratic country they will be free to join us.

LITTLEJOHNS: At the present time, which is the strongest country economically in the region? Botswana, perhaps?

MOGAE: No, well, it depends on what you are talking about.

LITTLEJOHNS: In mineral resources, for example.

MOGAE: Zimbabwe is the most highly industrialized of the nine members. I suppose Botswana, well, yes, at present, because it does not experience the acute foreign exchange shortages that other African countries are experiencing. People tend to think it is a rich country.

LITTLEJOHNS: What about the per capita income of the group as a whole? What is the average per capita income?

MOGAE: That, again, I can't say.

MENON: I understand that you're looking for support from donor countries in bringing this Community to life. Why do you need donor support for something which should essentially come from within the region?

MOGAE: First, we are a Development Coordination Conference, we are a group of underdeveloped countries, and some of us among the least developed, and therefore

we need assistance to develop. It's with regard to our development efforts that we need international assistance.

MENON: It's not to actually bring the Community itself to life that you need support, it's for general development?

MOGAE: General development. Bringing the Community about is our task, and it is our intention to do so and we think we'll be able to do that. It's going to take a lot of effort on our part to harmonize our policies, to continue to coordinate our development efforts and to integrate our economies, which is now the intention of the Community.

MENON: But what do you see as the major problems in this process? What do you say if you had to identify three major problems in this process? What would you point to?

MOGAE: Well, integration of economies is very difficult, as you know, from international experience. We hope, for instance, to be able to remove obstacles to the movement of capital and labour between us. But you know that is very difficult. It's easier said than done. You often hear in Africa how workers from another country have been sent back and so on. And we are going to work to try and remove those obstacles to make it possible for people to move from one country to another freely, including the ability to sell their labour where they can.

And that's not going to be easy, it's going to take a lot of convincing of the populations of these countries. It's quite often, you know, whenever you can't find a job, you think it's because of the presence of a guest worker, so to speak. And those are the kind of things we are going to try to do, and we are under no delusion that it's not going to be difficult.

COLLYMORE: Some say that the success of SADCC has been its ability to raise money for moral purposes in a region that's borne the brunt of South Africa's apartheid

policies. Do you think SADCC could have a stronger voice if there is a democratic South Africa?

MOGAE: We think so, yes.

COLLYMORE: Why is that, when there are pre-existing accords and some say South Africa's probably going to be more inward-looking? How much does it depend on the South Africa that cooperates with SADCC?

MOGAE: We have existed and achieved some success without the cooperation of South Africa. In fact, with the hostility of South Africa. One of the things we set out to do when we created the Conference 10 years ago was to coordinate, for instance, the rehabilitation of the physical infrastructure -- that's roads and railways and bridges -- and repair the ports in Mozambique. South Africa at that time in fact funded the sabotage of those efforts, the blowing up of the trains from Beira into Zimbabwe.

LITTLEJOHNS: Why did they do that?

MOGAE: Because some of us were dependent on access to the sea through their ports, and we set out to lessen our dependence on them. And they realized that of course repairing and rehabilitating the ports of Mozambique -- Maputo and Beira -- and rehabilitating the lines in Mozambique from Beira into Zimbabwe, from Nacala into Malawi, did have the effect of reducing our dependence on them, and they didn't like that.

EMEKEKWUE: Mr. Vice President, the drought in southern Africa is one of the biggest problems facing the region at the moment. How is SADCC responding to this situation?

MOGAE: As you know, we worked with the United Nations and appealed to the international community to assist us. We coordinate our efforts: we have a drought coordinating unit, we have a food security unit which takes stock of the availability of

food in the different countries, and we have this task force, Drought Task Force, which reports and coordinates the deliveries of food.

We are importing millions of tons into the region, and that requires substantial logistical support. And we have been able to do that. We have this task force finding out what ships are arriving at what ports, including South African ports of course, and what railway systems -- each of our railway systems has been allocated certain tonnages to move, and they monitor the progress that is being made by each of the railway systems in moving these tonnages of food.

My food security coordinator, who is a Zimbabwean and resident in Harare, tells me that between now and the next reaping season we will still need about 2 million tons of staple grains, of maize and sorghum. And then we are using largely our resources; but we also have been assisted by the international community, including international organizations like the World Food Programme and others; and a number of countries have pledged assistance to us, and we have received some of it, not yet all of it.

MENON: When you are creating an economic community or getting countries to work together, as you pointed out, a major problem is getting the people to accept each other and to work with each other. What's the situation in the SADCC region? Do you have any instruments or mechanisms by which people perceive, are made to see problems in a similar way? What's the media situation? How do the mass media -- do the same newspapers and magazines get around? Are there common television programmes?

MOGAE: Not enough of that. Yes, we have some of that. For instance, journalists, there are associations of SADCC journalists, the media -- they promote SADCC, yes. But our intention is to intensify that effort. And we, as government, go out of our way to try and sell the idea of integration to our own peoples.

MENON: We often hear that one of the problems in Africa particularly is that very often if you want to call from one African country to another the telephone call has to be rerouted through Europe. Is that a problem in the SADCC region?

MOGAE: That's one of our successes. We have succeeded in establishing telecommunications. There are direct telecommunication links between all the 10 member countries of SADCC. I am able to ring from my office, ring Zimbabwe, ring Tanzania, ring Namibia, Zambia, and Mozambique directly. Lesotho, Swaziland, no problem. That's one area where we are proud.

COLLYMORE: I think one of the problems has been getting countries to integrate their national policies with the regional integration movement. How are you going to overcome that problem? How do you get people to demonstrate the political will towards regional integration?

MOGAE: We think there is political will on the part of the governments, I think deriving from the relative success that we have achieved for the last 10 years. And we are now embarking on this more ambitious attempt to actually create an economic community based on the success we have achieved up to now. But, as I said earlier, we do anticipate that there will be problems, and we think we will overcome those problems by actually educating our people to demonstrate to them that it is in their long-term interests. Some of our countries -- a country like mine is a small economy, and we want to be able to explain to our people that we can benefit by having a greater market for our products rather than our own limited one.

Of course currently Botswana is in a customs union with the other members, with three other SADCC members -- Namibia, Lesotho, and Swaziland -- and that has been accepted. And it's an old customs union, and we are going to try and use that example to explain the benefits of an economic community. But there will be some problems, of course; there will be some resistance.

COLLYMORE: But I'd like to go back to the question of South Africa. There are some countries which do have bilateral relationships with South Africa. How do you get those countries to give up those relations and seek a more regional unity?

MOGAE: Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia are contiguous with South Africa physically. For us, South Africa is a geographical, physical, political, economic reality. But we were among the founding members of SADCC. And one of the objectives of SADCC, the Conference, was precisely to lessen our dependence and vulnerability versus South Africa. So the existence of South Africa did not blind us to our own basic interests and the fact that our interests lay with the other countries to the north of South Africa.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Vice President, if there should be, as is expected, a transition government in South Africa on the road to a totally new constitution, would that be enough for South Africa to get into SADCC?

MOGAE: We would begin initial contacts at that stage, but we would expect South Africa to become a full member of SADCC when it is fully democratized, when it's a totally new and different South Africa.

EMEKEKWUE: Mr. Vice President, what do you think will be the impact of the formation of the Southern African Development Community on the plans to set up an African economic community?

MOGAE: The Southern African Development Community idea is entirely consistent with the concept of an economic community for Africa. In fact, the Arusha Declaration itself states that these regional communities, such as SADCC and such as ECOWAS, are the building blocks out of which the economic community of Africa will ultimately be created.

LITTLEJOHNS: ECOWAS? What's that, Mr. Vice President?

MOGAE: ECOWAS is the Economic Community of West African States.

LITTLEJOHNS: Yes. The programme is WORLD CHRONICLE, our guest is the Honourable Festes G. Mogae, Vice President of the Republic of Botswana. Obi Emekekwue, I think you have another question.

EMEKEKWUE: Yes. I was just going to ask you what will be the kind of linkages that will exist between the Community and other regional groups in Africa and other places?

MOGAE: Well, after all, we are still all members of the Organization of African Unity; we are members of the Economic Commission for Africa; we have our regional bank, the African Development Bank; we interact that way, and in some cases there is trade between some of the countries in West Africa and some other southern African countries, and especially, for instance, the countries of eastern Africa. So we don't see SADCC as creating new barriers between us and the other countries, no. All we think is that in our endeavour, in our wish to move towards and economic community of Africa, we should move flexibly and allow smaller groups of countries to get closer together, and perhaps move a little faster than the rest.

MENON: When the Community is, shall we say, looking 20-30 years down the line, what kind of region would you want it to be when it is developed? What kinds of industries will you find in your region?

MOGAE: Well, we are not in a position to prescribe what industries should be there. We are looking for industrialization right now in my own country. We invite all sorts of investors. And it's for the private sector to decide what industries are feasible and viable and can perhaps be undertaken. But as you know, we are largely a mineral-rich region. South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Angola -- we have lots of minerals. It's our strength, it's also our weakness. Right now, of course, there is this persistence of recessional conditions in the world market, mineral prices have collapsed, and we are suffering as others are. But we are there. We have, for instance, wild life, a

rich variety of wild life. Southern Africa is one of the remaining depositories of a wide variety of wild life. We hope to develop tourism based on these assets.

MENON: Do you see a possible conflict between development of your industries, based on your mineral resources, and the development of your tourism industry? Because often when you develop industry, heavy industry, it destroys the environment.

MOGAE: Not nowadays. We all have undertaken, have signed treaties. Nowadays when you undertake your project you must do an environmental impact study. We in fact have had seminars and courses in our countries with the assistance of the World Bank and other institutions on these very ideas. And we know that the international community is very much interested in our part of the world. In my country there is the Okavango region, which is either world famous or world notorious. So we are aware of the constraints and the need, nowadays, to reconcile any industrialization with the environment if that industry has to be accepted. We talk of sustainable eco-tourism.

COLLYMORE: Mr. Vice President, on the question of regional security I believe there was a problem where nationals of some of SADCC's members were involved in the Defence Force in South Africa, you know, involved with the police. What is the state of that problem? Is it a problem still?

MOGAE: It is a problem still. You will recall that these nationals of ours are nationals that had been engaged by the South Africans against our countries. It was Angolans who were fighting against the Government of Angola; it was Mozambicans who were fighting the members of the opposition groups there; RENAMO fighting against the Government of Mozambique. The same thing in some Zimbabweans, we are told, but these are all people who were in fact used by the South African Government against their own government. So now they continue to be in the employ of South Africa. They are not easy to identify, because after all, the tribes there are similar, but we know they are there.

Of course, from the point of view of their countries of origin, they are not welcome, because they are enemies. But the liberation movements of course have expressed concern about the fact that these people continue to be used by the South African Government for purposes that are against the interests of the majority.

COLLYMORE: Is SADCC doing anything to address the problem?

MOGAE: I must admit up to now we have only worried about the problem. Because we don't know -- what can we do about them?

LITTLEJOHNS: Have you made representations to the South African authorities?

MOGAE: No, I don't think we have made formal representations against the South African authorities. But we have made public statements condemning the existence of these people. We have said that they should be released by the South African Government, but this is easier said than done. How do you expect Angola to receive these gentlemen with open arms when in fact they were responsible for much of the damage that was done against them, against the people of Angola, by these people? It is a problem facing us; I will admit to you that we haven't solved it as of now.

COLLYMORE: Is it an economic problem? Is it a problem of jobs, of going to South Africa where there are job opportunities?

MOGAE: Of course, right now there is a great deal of unemployment in South Africa. In fact, even more so than in some of the smaller countries. But yes, I suppose these people were lured by the South Africans because they were being offered the jobs in the South African military and police which were not available to them in their own countries.

EMEKEKWUE: There were expectations that SADCC should mesh with the Preferential Trade Area to form a stronger economic unit, but this never came to be. What was the problem?

MOGAE: The problem is that we have discussed this and found that that's not necessary at the present time, that the two institutions are complementary, that they can continue to exist separately, and that the smaller group of countries in southern Africa, the SADCC group of countries, can move faster and more easily to coordinate their actions in the context of SADCC than in the context of the PTA, which is a larger grouping of countries, which includes countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan, and so on. And I understand some other countries of north Africa or central Africa are contemplating joining.

Now, we don't see any inherent conflict between the two institutions, but we think that the smaller group of countries of southern Africa are easier to coordinate, and the kind of ambitious task we have set for ourselves of actually integrating our economies we find more feasible in relation to the 10 rather than the 18.

MENON: One of the problems, as you just mentioned, is the fact that South Africa plays off minority groups against national governments. To what extent does this reflect a lack of democracy in the region itself?

MOGAE: Yes, I think there was an element of that: to the extent that there was insufficient democracy, it did mean that opportunities existed for South Africa to use some groups in the way that they did use them. But I think all of our countries, as you know, are using their best endeavours to democratize.

MENON: What's the situation now? How many are democracies in the region?

MOGAE: Well, all.

LITTLEJOHNS: Depending on how you define democracy, perhaps?

MOGAE: Yes. Look, okay, let's take Angola. There have just been elections there that the United Nations said were fair. That was a genuine attempt to democratize. Now, of course, the opposition seem unwilling to accept the verdict of the electorate, which is unfortunate. But the Government of Angola no longer believes in a one party state. Other parties have been allowed, elections have been held. I call that democracy. It will not be perfect from day one. Democracy everywhere -- in the United States, here, or in Britain or in western Europe, everywhere, in India -- has evolved over time. Some of the countries, like mine, we have always had multiparty democracy, we have never had political prisoners. We have been a democracy. We are proud of that. We think that we were a democracy even before independence.

And that was also true in a number of the other countries. Then there were distortions, of course, resulting from liberation wars, et cetera. But we are democracies in SADCC, in Botswana, in Namibia, where the United Nations participated in the writing of the constitutions, in Zimbabwe, in Zambia. We only have current problems in Angola and Mozambique. But we are saying that those countries are making genuine efforts to democratize.

COLLYMORE: Mr. Vice President, how much does the success of SADCC depend on resolving the drought situation? On getting international assistance, assistance from the United Nations?

MOGAE: I don't think that the success of SADCC is going to depend on any one act. But of course, the more you can succeed in undertakings like drought relief, the greater the chances of success. And I would like to say that we think that we have successfully handled the drought, which was a very, very severe one. We haven't had people dying from starvation in spite of the fact that it was a very, very severe drought where even our large rivers, for the first time their flow was affected. The Zambezi, for instance. We even had to reduce electricity generation because big dams fell below the level of the turbines.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Vice President, you mentioned a little while ago the fact that South Africa is experiencing considerable unemployment. What is the unemployment situation in the SADCC countries? Is it severe?

MOGAE: It's also severe, yes. After all, with the developing countries you have this problem of the existence of a modern sector with a traditional sector, and it's quite often difficult to define unemployment.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Mogae, that's all the time we have. Thank you for joining us on this edition of WORLD CHRONICLE.

Our guest has been the Honourable Festes G. Mogae, Vice President of the Republic of Botswana. He was interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by Bhaskar Menon, of PTI-TV of India; Yvette Collymore, of Inter Press Service; and Obi Emekekwue, of the News Agency of Nigeria.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of WORLD CHRONICLE.

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